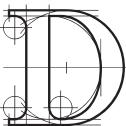


# *The Spurious Rites of Memphis and Misraim*

*Albert Pike, 33° & William L. Cummings, 33°*

Whatever the merits of the Egyptian Rite, or Rite of Memphis may be, it is quite sure that it is not generally recognized as a legitimate Rite of Free-Masonry; that the Bodies of it in the United States of America are entitled to and receive no consideration, it having been constantly used here for purposes of private profit; and that elsewhere in the world it has only here and there two or three isolated Supreme Powers which cannot be recognized by nor have relations of correspondence and amity with, those of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

—Albert Pike, January 20, 1884<sup>1</sup>

URING THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES, DEGREE fabricators created literally scores of Masonic rites, most of which disappeared leaving little or no trace. Of all the rites that survived, however, the most significant remains the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. Founded in 1801 in Charleston, South Carolina, it has become the largest and one of the most respected Masonic Rites in the world. Because of its success numerous imitators have appeared, the most infamous being Joseph Cerneau's so-called "Supreme Council." Like the Cerneau Scottish Rite, two other notorious contenders, called the Rite of Memphis and the Rite of Mis-

raim, also “borrowed” from the rituals of the Scottish Rite, hoping to capitalize on the Scottish Rite’s popularity and success. Although regular Masonic authorities quickly condemned them as spurious and clandestine, small groups were occasionally “revived” in the United States until they were finally absorbed, beginning in the 1930s, by the Grand College of Rites of the United States of America. The Grand College of Rites, which does not practice any of its rituals, remains the only regular Masonic organization in the United States with authentic claims to the Rites of Memphis and Misraim.

#### ALBERT PIKE’S 1865 ALLOCUTION

Early in his career Albert Pike paid little attention to either of these rites. His earliest comments reflect a type of sympathetic indifference, and reveal that he did not yet know how specious they actually were. By the 1860s, however, his study convinced him that both the Rites of Memphis and Misraim peddled “cheap wares” which were unworthy of consideration by Freemasons. We extract Pike’s article, “The Grand Orient of France and the Rite of Memphis,” from his 1865 allocution to the Supreme Council.<sup>2</sup>

#### WILLIAM L. CUMMING’S 1936 STUDY

In his 1936 allocution to the Grand College of Rites, Grand Chancellor J. Hugo Tatsch stated,

For the 1936 issue of *Collectanea* I have selected the fine article of Fellow William L. Cummings, on “The Spurious Rites of Memphis and Misraim,” to which should be added the able translations, never before published in the United States, of extracts from the “Bulletin of the Grand Orient of France,” on the Rites of Memphis and Misraim,<sup>1</sup> 1862–70. These were translated by our Assistant Redactor-general, Fellow John Black Vrooman.<sup>3</sup>

For some unknown reason Illustrious Cummings’s excellent but little-known paper was never published in full. Fortunately, however, Illustrious Arturo de Hoyos, 33°, who serves as the Grand Archivist and Chairman of the Publications Committee of the Grand College of Rites of the U.S.A., located a copy of Brother Cummings’s paper in the Archives of the Grand College of Rites, which we are now pleased to publish. William Leon Cummings, M.D., one of the ablest masonic scholars of his day, served as Grand Chancellor of the Grand College of Rites during the 1945–46 year. He is best known as one of the contributors to and editors of *Coil’s Masonic Encyclopedia* (1961). Readers should bear in mind that this paper does not take into account the many subsequent changes in Freemasonry in France. Extracts from Brother Cummings’s paper, with corrected dates, were used as an introduction to a publication of one

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version of the rituals of the Rite of Memphis. In our reprint of the Cummings paper, the corrected dates are set bold in brackets, e.g. [May 25, 1841], to indicate those published in *Collectanea*, vol. 3 (Grand College of Rites of the U.S.A., 1942), p. 16.

### THE APPENDICES

The Sovereign Sanctuary recorded the dissolution of the Rite of Memphis and its final absorption by the Grand College of Rites of the United States of America in great detail. Appendix 1 records incidents connected with these important events during 1931 and 1932, when the Sovereign Sanctuary determined to transfer its power and authority to the Grand College. Appendix 2 records the filial descent of the Rite of Memphis, from its beginning in France to its final absorption. Copies of these documents were provided by the Grand College of Rites of the United States of America and have been placed in the archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J., Washington, D.C.

### N O T E S

1. Albert Pike, Jan. 20, 1884, *Official Bulletin of the Supreme Council, 33d Degree for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States*, vol. VI (Gr.: Or.: of Charleston [Washington, D.C.], Apr., 1884), pp. 358–59.
2. *Transactions of the Supreme Council of the 33d Degree, of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Free-Masonry, for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America. 1857 to 1866. Reprinted.* (Washington: Joseph L. Pearson, Printer, 1878), pp. 348–50; 361–69.
3. The Grand College of Rites of the U.S.A. Minutes of Fourth Annual Convocation, p. 4. Mimeographed typescript. Washington, D.C., Feb. 22, 1936. Copy in the Archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J., Washington, D.C.



Figure 1. Jacques Etienne Marconis de Négre, 97°, Grand Hierophant of the Rite of Memphis. From *The Constitution and General Statutes for the Government of the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Freemasonry....* (New York: Excelsior Printing Co., 1874).

## THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

### THE GRAND ORIENT OF FRANCE AND THE RITE OF MEMPHIS

ALBERT PIKE, 33°

**I** am not aware that either the Rite of Mizraim or that of Memphis is dispensing of its cheap wares within our Jurisdiction. In the Northern Jurisdiction the latter is declared "to have assumed a position in relation to the other Orders of Masonry, that entitles it to a place in a Masonic work." The following account is given of its progress and present condition:

"It was introduced into the United States, November 9, 1856, by J. E. Marco-nis de Negre, Grand Hierophant. He conferred it upon a number of Masonic Brethren, and established a Supreme Council, 90th Degree with John Mitchell at its head. Shortly after, a Sovereign Grand Council 94th Degree, was instituted in New York, with David McLellan as Grand Master. But the system, for some reason, did not flourish in this country.

"In 1852, Harry J. Seymour, of New York, who had been one of the earliest supporters of the system, visited Europe, and was advanced to the 96th and highest degree, and invested with authority to establish on the Continent of America a Sovereign Grand Sanctuary of Conservators-General of the Order. This is the highest authority known to the Rite Under it a Sovereign Council General has been established for New England which is flourishing. Other State and combined State organization are under rapid headway, the whole embracing many hundred working members."

Harry J. Seymour 96th, is the Sov.: Gr.: Master of "The Sov.: Sanctuary of Ancient and Primitive Free-Masonry according to the Rite of Memphis, in and for the Continent of America;" and Robert D. Holmes, 95th, is the General Grand Expert. Both these Brethren are Members of "The Supreme Council for the Northern Jurisdiction of the United States, at New York," -which claims to be the regular Council for that Jurisdiction. If these Brethren have not sworn never to *receive* or *recognize* any higher degree in Masonry than the 33d, they are not 33ds. If they *have* so sworn, they have violated their obligations, because they *do* acknowledge and *have* received degrees *pretending* to be higher, since they *pretend* to give the 33d as one of their degrees, the 66th, perhaps.

I had occasion, recently, to heal a Brother (32° of the Ancient and Accepted Rite), resident in Nevada, who exhibited to me his Patent of the 94th Degree, signed by Bros.: Seymour and Edmund P. Hays, Sov.: Gr.: Commander of the present New York Supreme Council, among other persons. That Brother informed me that he received the whole of his degrees at once, from the 1st to

the 94th, the whole in an hour or two—perhaps less. I can furnish any one with the Ritual of the first sixty-six degrees, purchased for me at auction in Paris.

Every one can judge of the value of a *Rite* in Masonry, whose degrees consist only of what can be communicated in an hour or two—of signs, words and a sounding title, I know one Brother who received a Patent for all up to the 90th *sent* to him without his *taking* them or asking for them; and another who received them in half a minute, up to the 94th, by the pronunciation, by the *Hierophant* of a single short sentence.

I append to this Address a true account of the origin and progress of this Rite of Memphis, taken from the *Masonic Monthly* published at Boston, and which, from investigations long ago made by me, in translating documents connected with the history of Free-Masonry in France, I can vouch for as true.

Those who now manage the Rite and sell its degrees, in New York, publish that it is recognized by the Gr.: Or.: of France. But this is false, in the sense in which it is intended to be taken; and in selling degrees and titles by means of it, the vendors are obtaining money under false pretenses.

On the 30th of April, 1862, Grand Master Marshal Magnan addressed a circular to the dissenting Lodges and Masons of France, inviting them to return to their allegiance. Marconis seized the opportunity to apply for the affiliation of his Rite with the Grand Orient. His request was granted, and two new Lodges were soon after constituted. Yet, although the Grand College of Rites thus admitted the Rite of Memphis, this admission was accompanied with such restrictions that the Rite, *in fact*, exists no longer. Deprived of its constitution, its government, its Councils, its entire organization, and its 96 degrees, permitted only to work in the three Symbolic Degrees, subject to the prescriptions of the Grand Orient as regards the obtaining of the higher degrees, the Rite of Memphis is actually transformed into the Scottish Rite.

A member of a Lodge retaining the denomination of the Rite of Memphis, is not permitted to add the number of his high degree of that Rite to his name, nor to wear any jewel or decoration belonging to it. As to its work in the Blue Degrees, it in no respect materially differs from the old printed Rituals of the Scottish Rite, of which, as well as the Rite Moderne, any one can buy as many as he pleases in Paris.

Of course, the successors of those who invented the Rites of Mizraim and Memphis have the right to work them. But all Masons ought to be informed that they are mere shams, used only for the purpose of making money, by those who vend the degrees; communicating no useful information; as worthless as the tinsel and spangles of the Circus; and most of the degrees being absolutely nothing but idle words and signs. And, whenever there is a legal Council in the Northern Jurisdiction, it ought to see to it that none of its members set at naught

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their obligations by becoming Dignitaries in it, and giving what is pretended to be the 33d, as an inferior degree.

## A P P E N D I X .

### DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN THE ADDRESS OF THE SOV.:. GR.: COMMANDER.

#### THE RITE OF MEMPHIS.

In a work entitled "*The Sanctuary of Memphis*," by J. E. Marconis, the author, who styles himself the founder of the Rite in question, thus briefly gives an account of its origin.

"The Rite of Memphis, or Oriental Rite, was introduced into Europe by Ormus, a seraphic priest of Alexandria, and Egyptian Sage, who had been converted by St. Mark, and reformed the doctrines of the Egyptians in accordance with the principles of Christianity."

"The disciples of Ormus continued, until 1118, to be the sole guardians of ancient Egyptian wisdom as purified by Christianity, and Solomonian science. This science they communicated to the Templars. They were then known by the title of *Knights of Palestine or Brethren Rose-Croix of the East*. In them, the Rite of Memphis recognizes its immediate founders."

In defining the object and intention of his Order, Marconis speaks as follows:

"The Masonic Rite of Memphis is a combination of the ancient mysteries; it taught the first men to render homage to the Deity. Its dogmas are based on the principles of humanity its mission is the study of that wisdom which serves to discern truth; it is the beneficent dawn of the development of reason and intelligence; it is the worship of the qualities of the human heart, and the repression of its vices; in fine, it is the echo of religious toleration, the union of all belief, the bond between all men, the symbol of the sweet illusions of hope, preaching the faith in God that saves, and the charity that blesses."

Thus it will be seen that this Rite, which purports to be it continuation of the Ancient Mysteries, and pretends to contain a vast amount of instruction, does but announce the aim and mission of modern Free-Masonry. And yet its founder is the first to disobey the precepts which it enjoins; for one of the principal duties of these adept's is to be always scrupulously truthful; while his work is but a mass of misrepresentations and fictions, invented by him for the purpose

of imposing upon the credulity of others. The introduction to his book above quoted affords one proof; the continuation of his recital will furnish others:

"The Rite of Memphis is the sole depository of high Masonry, the true primitive Rite, the Rite par excellence, which has come down to us without any alteration, and is consequently the only Rite which can justify its origin and the combined exercise of its rights by constitutions, the authenticity of which cannot be questioned. The Rite of Memphis, or Oriental Rite, is the veritable Masonic tree, and all systems, whatsoever they be, are but detached branches of this institution, venerable for its great antiquity, and born in Egypt. The real deposit of the principles of Masonry written in the Chaldee language is preserved in the sacred Ark of the Rite of Memphis, and in part in the Grand Lodge of Scotland, at Edinburgh, and in the Maronite Convent on Mount Lebanon."

To this extract we subjoin the first article of the organic Statutes of the Order, from which the rest may be readily imagined:

"Bro.: Marconis de Negre, the Grand Hierophant, is the sole consecrated depository of the traditions of this Sublime Order."

After this it would certainly be superfluous to ask, what are the Constitutions or what are those precious documents in the Chaldee language that are "preserved in the sacred Ark of the Rite of Memphis?" The fact is, that they never existed, except in the fertile imagination of the inventor of the Rite. It is but the same old story, the same language, the same tactics which Masonic charlatans have for a century and a half made use of, in order to make partisans and victims.

As regards the introduction of the Rite in France, Marconis de Negre informs us, that a certain Samuel Honis, a native of Cairo, brought it from Egypt, in 1814 (how or from whom he received it, we are not informed), and in company with Gabriel Mathieu Marconis (father of Marconis de Negre), Baron Dumas, and the Marquis de la Rogne, founded a Lodge of this Rite at Montauban, on the 30th of April, 1815; that this Lodge was closed on the 7th of March, 1816 (why, we are not told); and that in consequence the archives were confided to the care of the father of Marconis, who was appointed (by whom it is not stated) Grand Hierophant of the Order.

The falsity of these assertions is easily demonstrated. Jacques Etienne Marconis was initiated into the Rite of Mizraim, at Paris, 21st of April, 1833, being then twenty-seven years of age. On the same day he received the first thirteen degrees of the Rite, for this Egyptian ladder was not very difficult to ascend. On the 27th of June of the same year, certain charges were preferred against him by several of the Brethren, in consequence of which he was excluded from the Rite. Shortly afterwards left Paris and went to Lyons, where, under the name of *Negre*, he founded a Lodge of the Rite of Mizraim, with the title of "*la Bienveillance*," of which he assumed the Mastership. As Master of that Lodge, lie was elevated to

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the 66th Degree, by the supreme Authority of that Rite, that is to say, by the Bros.: Bedarride, who little imagined that the Bro.: Negre and the Bro.: J. E. Marconis, whom they had previously expelled, were one and the same person.

It was not long, however, before new charges were preferred against him, by the Brethren of Lyons, and on the 27th day of May, 1838, he was once more expelled from the Order. After these two expulsions, Marconis, satisfied that he could no longer play a part in the Rite of Mizraim but feeling that he was born for great things, did what many others had done before him—he *created* a Masonic power!

Appropriating the Mizraimite ladder, manufactured by Lechangeur, and adding a few rounds, he soon constructed his Rite of Memphis, arid the work being finished, he constituted himself its “head and front.”

To furnish an origin and a history to this work was no very difficult task; and in accomplishing it we must acknowledge that he showed much more respect for the common sense of the Masons than did Michel Bedarride who, in his history of the “Order of Mizraim,” was not satisfied, like Lechangeur, to attribute its origin to the Egyptian king of that name, but went so far as to ascribe it to the Deity Himself. Marconis only dates his Rite from the commencement of our era, hoping, probably, that this modesty on his part might induce Masons to accept it without distrust, and to put faith in those precious documents written in the Chaldee language, which, he informed them, were to be found in the sacred Ark of the Rite of Memphis. Marconis was, in reality, possessed of considerably more erudition than the manufacturers of the Rite of Mizraim; and in constructing his own system, ingeniously varied and transposed the degrees of the former, altering the titles, passwords, signs, etc.; thus in a manner disguising their real origin. Many of his degrees, however, were never completed, and remain to this day degrees merely in name, having no Ritual, or at best, mere skeletons, to be, filled up at the pleasure of any speculator who chooses to purchase them. The extravagant character of the Rite need hardly be alluded to; the published Constitutions, Diplomas, Edicts, etc., furnish abundant evidence of the fact. This heaping up of such a mass of mystic rubbish, merely for the purpose of constituting and governing an association of men, the mission of which is “the development of reason and intelligence, and the study of wisdom,” is simply ridiculous.

In 1838, after having compiled the Rituals of his Rite, Marconis visited Belgium as Grand Hierophant and successor of his father, and opened negotiations for the establishment of his Order in that country. Meeting with little encouragement he returned to Paris, where, under the name of *Marconis Letuillart*, he succeeded in gathering together a few isolated Brethren, and instituted a Lodge, “The Disciples of Memphis.” On the 23d of March, 1838, he constituted a Grand Lodge under the title of “Osiris,” which was intended to govern and superintend

the Subordinate Lodges he expected to create. On the 121st of May, 1839, he instituted a Chapter "les Philadelphes," and on the 29th of February, 1840, a Lodge "les Sages d'Heliopolis."

On the 7th of April, 1839, he published the Statutes of the Order, and finally succeeded in establishing two Lodges of his Rite at Brussels. But about this time he met with a serious and unexpected repulse. When he had constituted his first Lodge at Paris, the leaders of the Rite of Mizraim, taking umbrage at this invasion of their Jurisdiction, at once wrote to the Prefect of Police, informing him of the expulsion of Marconis, and praying that he might be debarred from constituting and holding Lodges. Not obtaining as speedy relief as they expected, they issued a circular addressed to all their Lodges, Chapters, etc., warning them against the machinations of Marconis, and setting forth their reasons for his expulsion. The police finally interfered, and on the 17th of May, 1840, all the Lodges of the Rite of Memphis were closed. From that date, until 1848 finding "his occupation gone," he turned his attention to Masonic literature and published in succession several works, the "Sanctuary of Memphis," the "Hierophant," the "Mystic Sun," the "Mystic Temple," "the Masonic Pantheon," etc.

In 1848-9, taking advantage of the political events of the period, Marconis succeeded in reestablishing three Lodges at Paris: the "Disciples of Menes," the "Disciples of Pythagoras," and the "Disciples of Memphis." The Belgian and other Lodges he had previously founded, however, "slept the sleep that knows no waking."

During the time that Marconis de Negre managed to keep his Lodges alive, he followed the example of the Bros.: Bedarride, by seeking to procure adherents among the members of the Grand Orient and Supreme Council, conferring upon them *gratis* the highest degrees of his Rite.

In 1850 Marconis went to England, and after several attempts succeeded in establishing a Grand Lodge, "Disciples of Menes," which was intended to be the representative Supreme Council of the Order for Great Britain and Ireland. J. P. Berjean was constituted Grand Master, and Representative of the Grand Hierophant.

The feeling which arose in 1850 against Masonry in general, in France obliged Marconis to close his Lodges, and in December, 1851, they for the second time yielded to a feeling of somnolency, and "lay down to pleasant dreams." The government of the Rite was then transferred to the Grand Lodge he had established at London, and on the 30th of November, Berjean was solemnly installed as "Grand Master of Light" of the New Mystic Temple, and of the General Grand Council of the Order, being at the same time appointed "Agent of the Hierophant." The Order at that time consisted in London of but some thirty members, chiefly political refugees, among whom were Louis Blanc and a few other

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men of note. These, however, soon retired and their places were taken by a class of men who, in the course of a few years, became so turbulent and unruly that the Grand Master Berjean was obliged to dissolve the Lodge, and Marconis himself thought it prudent to declare that lie had washed hands of the whole affair, and disowned all responsibility relative to the proceedings of the Lodge.

Still fondly hoping for the realization of his pet scheme, Marconis, in 1852, endeavored through Bro.: Rebold, the well known Masonic author, to negotiate with the Grand Orient for the affiliation with that authority of the Memphisian Lodges. The demand was rejected, and Marconis then again devoted his attention to Masonic publications.

In 1860 lie came to New York with an assortment of diplomas, charters, jewels, etc., for the purpose of propagating his Rite. He had some time before his arrival constituted, by Deputy, two Chapters and a Council of his Rite at New York. One of these Bodies was composed of "American citizens of African descent." At Troy, N.Y., he instituted a so-called Grand Lodge, "Disciples of Memphis," of which a Bro.: Durand was Grand Master. After a brief sojourn in this country, Marconis and his Prime Minister disappeared somewhat suddenly, and were next heard of as having returned to Paris. The seed sown by them has indeed sprouted in various places, and still retains a sort of spasmodic existence, but its growth is composed of such heterogeneous and antagonistic elements, that it will, in all probability, soon die a natural death.

In London, some of the fragments of the former Grand Lodge afterwards endeavored to revive their organization, and finally succeeded in *re-constituting themselves*. This Body is still in existence, but has no Masonic status whatever, the Grand Lodge of England regarding them as clandestine Masons, and forbidding its subordinates from holding Masonic communication with them.

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*Bulletin du Grand Orient de France Suprême Conseil pour la France et les possessions Françaises*

*Mars 1865, pp. 4, 5.*

THE GRAND MASTER OF THE ORDER, TO THE PRESIDENTS  
OF LODGES:

S.: S.: S.:

VERY DEAR BRETHREN: Article 8 of the Constitution declares that Masonic initiation has several degrees, which are passed through and conferred according to the forms indicated by the Rituals, and of which the highest is the 33d of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.—(Art. 8 of the Constitution.)

The names specially belonging to these degrees, and the insignia appropriated to them, and which tradition, the Rituals of the degrees, or the Statutes-General of the Order have sanctioned, are the only ones recognized by the Grand Orient, and the only ones allowed; all other titles or decorations are interdicted by Articles 42, 43, 44 and 262 of the Statutes-General.

The use of Masonic decorations, indicating degrees above the 33d Degree, is, then, not only a violation of the law, but the negation of the principles embodied in Articles 11 and 19 of the Constitution, which places all Masons and all Rites under the level of equality among themselves.

We learn, in the meanwhile, that in contempt of these wise principles, and despite the general prescriptions of the law, Masons present themselves in the Lodge, and at different Masonic reunions, decorated with jewels and cordons not authorized, and which have no claim to be authorized:

That some Lodges, under the form of Masonic rewards, distribute jewels that bear the greatest possible resemblance to the decorations of the Civil Order; and that, while the wearing of the apron, the symbol of labour, is more and more disused, insignia not recognized by the laws of Masonry are every day more and more multiplied:

That Brethren, Masons originally of the Rite of Memphis, whom the Grand Orient has admitted into its bosom, without, however, recognizing or authorizing the great number of degrees of that Rite, forget the conditions of that admission, and wear on their cordons the ostensible sign of their former degrees, or, in signing their names, ostentatiously affix the high number of degrees they had acquired:

The decision of the Council of the Order, published in the, Official Bulletin of November, 1802, pages 418 *et seq.*, is thus disregarded; for, by the terms of that decision, the titles of the Brethren of that Rite having, been *visé*d and regularized, either to the degree of Master or to that of Rose Croix, no one among these Brethren can claim to possess any other degree than that indicated in this *visa*; and for them as for all, the provisions of Articles 130 and 137 of the Statutes-General are obligatory.

It is our duty, very dear Brethren, to put an end to these different abuses; we point them out to all Masons, and particularly to the vigilant attention of the Presidents of workshops.

Inasmuch as the Statutes-General of the Order define still more particularly, if that is possible, the insignia of every degree, and proscribe whatever incongruous or shocking there is in Masonic decorations, restoring everywhere unity and simplicity, we appeal to the firmness and good taste of all our Brethren; but it belongs, above all, to the Venerables to cause, the law to be respected; it is for them a right and a duty to refuse to admit into their Temples every Mason of the

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Jurisdiction, wearing a decoration, a cordon, a title, a degree, not recognized by the Gr.: Orient of France. Any weakness in these respects would be a fault, any toleration an infraction of the Regulations. We are confident that our appeal will be listened to, and will produce the best fruits.

Receive, very dear Brethren, the assurance of my high and affectionate consideration.

*The Marshal of France  
Grand Master of the Masonic Order,*

By the Grand Master:

MAGNAN.

*The Grand Master Adjunct,  
A. LENGLE*

## TRAVAUX DU CONSEIL DE L'ORDRE

SÉANCE DU 13 FEVRIER, 1865.

The Session is opened under the Presidency of the Hon.: Bro.: de Saint Jean.

The President then causes to be read the following letter, addressed to the Council of the Order, by the Ill.: Grand Master Adjunct, charged *ad interim* with the Administration:

VERY DEAR BRETHREN: Forty Brethren of the Rite of Mizraim, constituted into permanent Lodge, under the title of Loge Orientale de Mizraim, have asked of the Grand Orient of France, of date the 24th of December, 1864, the favour of being admitted among the Bodies working under its Obedience, and of here practicing their Rite.

Moreover these Brethren present themselves as composing the great majority of the Masons of the Rite of Mizraim, and seem not to doubt that their admission into the bosom of the Grand Orient will be followed by the accession of the whole body of Masons of that Rite.

They justify, or rather they explain, that step, by certain measures taken by the Sovereign Grand Council of the Rite of Mizraim, to which they protest that they cannot assent, and of which it does not belong to us to judge.

The Council of the Order, in its Session of the 26th of December, ult., referred the application of these Brethren to the preliminary examinations of the Gr.: College of the Rites.

After inquiry, the Grand College,

Considering that the demandants represent but a portion of the Masons of the Rite of Mizraim;

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That the Order of Mizraim, far from finding itself dissolved, or its existence menaced by the withdrawal of these Brethren, performs and has not ceased to perform its functions;

That the Supreme Power of this Rite, by communications dated the 21st of December, 1864, and the 3d of February, 1865, has specified to the Grand Orient of France a certain number of these petitioners as expelled Brethren;

That, as matters stand, the Grand Orient cannot grant the request of these Brethren, without injury to Masonic morality, and without failing in that respect due to every regular and legitimate Authority;

Considering, moreover, that these Brethren request to be admitted into the bosom of the Grand Orient, retaining the work peculiar to their Rite, and, very specially, their ninety Masonic degrees;

That their admission, upon these conditions, far from being a new step taken in the Grand Orient towards unity, would, on the contrary, be to remove it to a greater distance;

Has, in its Session of 11th February, inst., unanimously determined to reject the request of these Brethren, with permission to them to constitute themselves into a Lodge, in one of the Rites recognized by the Grand Orient, conforming to Art. 104 *et seq.* of our Statutes, and to establish their qualifications in that respect.

I hasten, very dear Brethren, to bring this decision to your notice, that you may be enabled to act definitively upon it.

Receive, very dear Brethren, the assurance of my affectionate sentiments.

*The Grand Master Adjunct of the Order,  
Charged ad interim with the Administration,*  
*(Signed) LENGLE.*

Paris, this 13 February, 1865.

## SEANCE DU 6 MARS, 1865.

The Session is opened under the Presidency of the Hon.: Bro.: Dronet.

The Brother Fauvety, in the name of the Committee of Administrative Affairs, read the following report:

VERY DEAR BRETHREN: Forty Masons Of the Rite of Mizraim separated from the Central Power of that Rite, in consequence of dissensions with which it is not for us to intermeddle, have formed a permanent Lodge, which they wish to place under the Obedience of the Grand Orient of France.

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. . . . A demand which seemed to have for object to transfer the Supreme Power of Mizraim into the Grand Orient of France; for the claim was no less than to preserve the right of conferring, the 90 degrees, delivering diplomas, &c. Such pretensions were perfectly absurd; and it is evident that the petitioners advanced them without understanding their extent, since their effect would be to establish one Supreme Power within the bosom of another Supreme Power, a State within a State.

. . . .  
A letter of the Brother Leonard . . . reduces the request to these two heads:  
1st. Constitution of a Lodge under the distinctive title of *L.: Orientale de Mizraim*.

2d. Authorization to work in this Lodge in the three first Symbolic Degrees, according to the forms of the Rite of Mizraim.

Postponing any decision as to the formation of a Chapter, the right to ask which hereafter is reserved.

. . . .  
It is merely certain Masons who come and petition to be allowed to constitute a Lodge under the obedience of the Grand Orient of France.

This being the case, are we to inquire whence they come, and to what obedience they have belonged?

No. All we require to know is, if they are Masons, and if their Brethren know them as such.

Well! their character of Masons is uncontested. The Masons of the Rite of Mizraim, like those of the Scottish Rite, are admitted as visitors in the Bodies of the Grand Orient; and when one of them seeks affiliation with one of our Lodges, it is granted as if he had been initiated in a Lodge of the French Rite.

French Rite, Scottish Rite, Rite of Memphis, Rite of Mizraim, what do these words signify? In the dogmatic point of view, in the scientific point of view, nothing, absolutely nothing. They represent differences altogether insignificant, in the words, in the signs of the symbolism, and the special fashions of counting the degrees of the Masonic Hierarchy beyond the first three, which are everywhere the same, and everywhere fundamental.

. . . .  
We do not ask that anything which any one has shall be taken from him. Let those who have acquired the right of classing themselves at any degree whatever of the Masonic scale, retain their privilege. Let us in everything respect acquired facts, where they infringe neither order, which is the good of all, nor liberty, which is the good of each. But that toleration which we ask for the degrees, we also demand for the Rites. There were in France three recognized Rites; there was a fourth, from the day when the Grand Orient permitted the

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Rite of Memphis to work under its Obedience. Very well! We claim for each of these four Rites the same toleration, and we believe that the Grand Orient owes equal protection to each. . . . .

What is asked of us is the permission to form a Lodge under the Obedience of the Grand Orient of France; and we might refuse this permission. But we ought not to do so, unless the applicants are either not Masons or have become unworthy. But those who apply to us are honest men and recognized Masons. We ought, then, to grant the authorization asked.

It is true it is added that they desire to work according to the Mizram formula, because they possess and are accustomed to that Rite. In this fact, which particularly concerns the Lodge, we see nothing inconvenient for the Grand Orient. We do not see why, when Lodges work, under the protection of the Grand Orient of France, not only in the French Rite, but also in the Scottish Rite and Rite of Memphis, they may not work in the Rite of Mizraim which is recognized in France, and which, except in its higher degrees, with which we are not dealing, any more than with those of Memphis, has forms which scarcely at all differ from those of, the French Rite.

Consequently we have the favour to propose to the Council to authorize the Provisional Lodge petitioning to constitute itself under the jurisdiction of the Grand Orient, and to work in the three Symbolic Degrees, either in the French Rite or the Rite of Mizraim; but on condition that it shall take another distinctive name, and shall not use the word Mizraim, except to indicate the manner of the work of the Lodge.

These conclusions were put to the vote and adopted.

## THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

### THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

WILLIAM L. CUMMINGS, 33°

*This study was made by a committee, headed by William L. Cummings, M.D., of and for the Grand College of Rites of the United States of America, and is issued by the Grand College as the first of a series of historical treatments of various dormant rites of or associated with Speculative Freemasonry in the United States, as a service to legitimate Freemasonry of America. Membership in the Grand College of Rites (of which Harold V. B. Voorhis, P.G.C., 33 Washington Square, West, New York City, N.Y. is Grand Registrar) is restricted to one hundred Fellows, whose admission is predicated upon their Masonic erudition and scholarship.*

**S**uccess breeds imitation. This statement has never been more fully exemplified than in connection with legitimate Speculative Freemasonry, which from its very inception after the Revival of 1717 in London, has been beset with imitators ranging all the way from good-natured mockery to vicious schemes to dupe the innocent and unwary. The excellent reputation of freemasonry and the quite universal knowledge of its high aims and ideals removes the "sales resistance" which frauds and charlatans would encounter in imitating and promoting a less known fraternal organization. Freemasonry's own concerns are, unfortunately, an aid to those who would further their own evil ends by duping innocent and well-intentioned individuals by plausible claims of an easy method of admission to an exclusive fraternity. It is only when the zeal of such unscrupulous promoters overcomes their discretion that they are halted. Sooner or later some of them run afoul of local ordinances, state statutes and occasionally of federal postal regulations, and there is an exposure which becomes general knowledge. The Darius Wilson frauds in Massachusetts in 1911, and the McBlain Thompson Masonic Fraud Case, tried in Federal Court at Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1922<sup>1</sup> are striking examples.

These very cases furnish evidence on the spurious rites to be discussed in this article. Although the Memphis and Misraim rites have been practically dormant for long period, there are several parties who claim more or less doubtful authority over them, and it is not at all improbable that attempts may again be made to propagate them in the United States. For this reason we present to the American Masonic Craft, through the columns of the Masonic press, positive evidence of the history of these rites and their illegal and illegitimate nature.

In every case the activities of these rites are tainted in their diffusion because they have been promoted, mainly, either by those who had no legitimate or rec-

ognized Masonic status whatever or who have been expelled or excluded from the Craft of Freemasonry because of unworthy acts.

Shortly after the so-called Revival in 1717, Freemasonry was introduced from England into France where it became extremely popular. Not satisfied to practice Masonry in the original form in which it had been transmitted to them, numerous ritual writers proceeded to devise additional "degrees" of their own, and by 1750 there were several hundred such degrees in existence.<sup>2</sup> Such of these as possessed any real merit were cumulated into specific Rites, the most notable of which was the "Rite of Perfection" which was introduced into the Western Hemisphere by Stephen Morin in 1761. This Rite, originally consisting of twenty-five degrees, was afterwards expanded to thirty-three degrees and now constitutes the well-known and entirely legitimate Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. This Rite is controlled by regularly organized Supreme Councils, the oldest of which is that for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America, organized at Charleston, South Carolina, in 1801, to which all legitimate bodies of this Rite can meditately or immediately trace their origin. While in English-speaking countries, with one or two minor exceptions, the first three degrees of this Rite are never practiced, the remaining degrees being conferred only upon those who have received the symbolic degrees in bodies regularly chartered by Grand Lodges, in some countries, notably the Latin-American ones, it is almost the only Masonic system known.

#### ORIGIN OF THE RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

This article treats of the history of these organizations rather than of their ritualistic and allegorical philosophies. For that reason there is no necessity of discussing the alleged origins of the bodies as set forth in their rituals and lectures. An oriental antiquity is claimed for them which is purely fabulous, and it is amusing to see the variations presented by the self-constituted heads of these bodies when knaves fell out among themselves and drew upon fertile imaginations for fanciful origins.

The Rite of Misraim (or Mizraim) is the older of the two, but it takes secondary place in the treatment of them as it became merged with the Rite of Memphis. The two rites are so similar that their names have become synonymous for each other, although the term "Rite of Memphis" is the one best representing the two rites when considered independently. The Rite of Memphis was propagated in the United States, Italy, France, Rumania, Great Britain, Egypt, Germany, and even South America. In all these countries, with the possible exception of Egypt, where it was more or less active up to a comparatively recent date, it is now nothing more than a name.

**THE RITE OF MISRAIM OR MIZRAIM**

Practically all authorities are agreed in attributing the origin of this Rite to Milan, Italy, in the year 1805.<sup>3</sup> The Supreme Council, 33° Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite for France had been founded in Paris a year earlier, through the activities of the Count de Grasse-Tilly, who had received the 33° in America. About the same time, Germain Hacquet carried to France from San Domingo, W[est] I[ndies], the Rite of Heredom in twenty-five degrees and established a Grand Consistory to govern it, entirely independent of the Grand Orient of France,<sup>4</sup> but had nothing to do with the formation of the Supreme Council. De Grasse-Tilly, in 1804, gave the degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite to the principal members of the Grand Orient of France; and after the fall of the Empire a Supreme Council in the bosom of the Grand Orient was organized, which still exists<sup>5</sup> though now inactive. Legitimate Scottish Rite Masonry in France is now under control of the Supreme Council 33°, which is independent of the Grand Orient.

It has been claimed that the Rite of Misraim owed its principles and form of organization to the Primitive Rite of Philadelphes of Narbonne, which was established in 1779, and in 1786 united with the Grand Orient of France. Of this, however, there is no positive proof. From certain startling similarities between this Rite and the *Rite de la Sagesse Egyptienne*, concerning which very little has ever been published, the originators of the Rite of Misraim may have had a knowledge of and drawn upon the latter for their material. At any rate, they did not hesitate to draw freely upon other rites, and at least five of their degrees were "lifts" from the Ancient and Accepted Rite.<sup>6</sup> The Rite of Misraim originally had eighty-seven degrees, but was soon expanded to ninety.

Some writers contend that the creation of the Rite of Misraim was the work of the Bedarride brothers, but this is not the case. The chief originator, or more correctly compiler, of the Rite was one Lechangeur, who had been refused admission into the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, and who organized the Rite of Misraim in opposition to the former.<sup>7</sup> It was, however, the three Bedarride brothers, Joseph, Michel, and Marc, the last named of whom perpetuated their memory by publishing a history of the rite in Paris, in 1845, entitled *De L'Ordre de Misraim*, a two volume work of some 861 pages, who introduced and propagated the Rite in France, about 1813-14. There it partook of the dissension and schisms which were so indissolubly part of the eighteenth and nineteenth century French Masonic activities. Thus precedents were established which the American progenitors observed equally as meticulously in subsequent decades.

The Grand Orient of France, which controlled a number of degrees other than the symbolic grades of Ancient Craft Masonry, refused recognition to the new rite. The governing body dissolved, but some of the constituent lodges con-

tinued their work. They were very naturally considered as clandestine bodies and treated as such.

#### THE RITE OF MEMPHIS

In the absence of contemporary documents and published accounts, we must rely upon other records for the origin of this rite. The earliest authentic account<sup>8</sup> attributes its beginning to one Samuel Honis, a native of Cairo, Egypt, who, with Gabriel Mathieu Marconis de Negre and others founded the first lodge, *Les Disciples de Memphis*, at Montauban, France, in 1815. Proponents of the Rite admit that this lodge suspended labor the following year, and state that the archives were entrusted to Marconis de Negre, Grand Hierophant, who revived the Rite in 1838 in Brussels and Paris. The French body was styled the Grand Lodge Osiris.<sup>9</sup>

The Rite of Memphis published its Statutes and Regulations on January 11, 1839, and Jacques-Etienne Marconis, Jr., was named Grand Hierophant, depositary of traditions and general archives of the Order.<sup>10</sup> During 1839 and 1840 several other Lodges were established, among them being the Chapitral Lodge *Philadelphis* at Paris; the lodges *Bienveillance* and *Sages d'Heliopolis* in the Orient of Belgium and the Lodge *Chevaliers de Palestine*, at Marseilles.<sup>11</sup>

On February 25, [1841], the Prefect of Police in Paris requested the members of the Masonic Order of Memphis to cease their labors, and on [May 25, 1841], the Grand Hierophant declared the Masonic Rite of Memphis at refreshment. They again resumed labor in Paris on March 5, 1848, several other lodges being formed in that year, [1848] and [1851].<sup>12</sup> Although unrecognized by the Grand Orient which, as supreme authority of French Masonry, held their lodges clandestine, the Rite enjoyed considerable prosperity and extended itself into various parts of Europe and South America. Masonic authorities put a stop to the Rite's emissaries in Berlin in 1861,<sup>13</sup> but there are evidences of activities in Germany in the present century. The trend of political events put the French lodges "to sleep" again on [December 21, 1851].<sup>14</sup>

The Rite in the United States rests upon a foundation which was unsound from the very inception. This fact, supported by a definite pronunciamento from the Grand Orient of France, reproduced herewith in full, must be emphasized at this point, because the proponents of the Rite very conveniently overlook this important detail when presenting their versions. Its development in this country, however, must be deferred for the moment, but will be treated fully in subsequent paragraphs.

#### RELINQUISHMENT OF MARCONIS'S AUTHORITY

Political developments and Masonic opposition in France caused the activities of the Rite to be transferred to London, where the Grand Lodge of England

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took cognizance of it and condemned it in no uncertain terms, as we shall see later. Marconis also visited America, and the Rite was established in New York in 1856. This, too, will be dealt with in detail.

Masonic authority in France was vested in the Grand Orient of France. Unlike American Grand Lodges, with which we are more familiar, this body controlled rites and grades other than the symbolic degrees, through a Grand College attached to it. This Grand College of Rites assumed authority over all Masonry in France, at one time claiming to have the Scottish Rite under its control, and influenced the Scottish Rite developments in England and Ireland to such an extent that serious situations arose between those bodies and the two Scottish Rite Supreme Councils in the United States.<sup>15</sup>

Marconis, rightfully believing that his Rite would have a better status if operated under the aegis of the Grand Orient, applied to it for recognition. At the same time one of the French Lodges, called *Sectateurs de Menes* of the Rite of Memphis demanded of the Grand Orient an authorization to work under its jurisdiction. The Grand College of Rites was consulted and by a decree of November 12, 1862, admitted the Rite of Memphis into its bosom. It was required, in order to accomplish this, that Marconis divest himself of all authority he held up to that time and to deliver the entire Rite and its creations into the control of the Grand Orient. This he did, whereupon the symbolic lodges of the Rite in France were recognized and authorized to continue work in the three symbolic degrees; but the higher grades from the 4th to the 97th, inclusive, were shelved. At that time the degrees of Masonry from the 4th to the 33rd, inclusive, were under the direction of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, through its chamber in the Grand Orient of France, and authority to work them could only be obtained from that body. The degrees beyond the 33rd in the Rite of Memphis have never been brought legitimately from the darkness into which they were cast by the Grand Orient, when it assumed control over that Rite. Even the symbolic Lodges of the Rite of Memphis soon abandoned their rituals and adopted the system of the Modern French Rite, so that by 1870 the Rite of Memphis went entirely out of existence so far as any connection with legitimate Masonry is concerned. While the Grand Orient did violate its policies in regard to some other Masonic rites worked in the United States and South America, it never did modify its acts relative to the Rite of Memphis, and that Rite became as dead as the proverbial door nail after Marconis relinquished his authority in 1862.<sup>16</sup>

### INTRODUCTION INTO THE UNITED STATES

The controversial exponents of the Rite of Memphis are agreed upon its origins in the United States, no matter how much they differ in the later details. It appears safe to attribute the Rite in the U.S.A. to Jacques-Etienne Marconis de

Negre, who was Grand Hierophant, 97°, prior to his surrender of the Rite to the Grand Orient of France. Marconis visited New York City in 1856, and on November 9th of that year founded a Supreme Council and issued a warrant in which John Mitchell, 95°, was named as president for seven years, and authorizing him to work up to and including the 90°. Mitchell was the *Sublime Dai* of the Supreme Council, and associated with him were ten others, with grades of 94° and 95°. On March 1, 1857, a Sovereign Grand Council General, 94°, was founded with David McLellan, a Major in the 79th Infantry, New York Militia, as the head. Marconis returned to France in 1857. McLellan resigned his office April 27, 1861, to accompany his regiment to the front and appointed Harry J. Seymour as his successor.

Where Seymour, erstwhile sailor, actor, and costumer, and who was aptly styled the "stormy petrol" of high-grade Masonry, received the work in 1861, or prior to that date, is not recorded by the Rite's proponents. He was at this time also a member of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, in which he held the 32°. He was then advanced to the 33° in 1859, and on June 24, 1860, became Grand Master of ceremonies of the Supreme Council. He was expelled by the Supreme Council on December 14, 1865, for gross un-Masonic conduct.<sup>17</sup>

Seymour went to France in the Summer of 1862. Let us tell of his reception there in his own words:

I arrived in Paris in July 1862, where I was cordially received by Grand Hierophant, Marconis de Negre, and was by him introduced to the leading Masons of France, many of whom formed the Executive body of the Rite of Memphis. I found the Rite in a most flourishing condition, working then, as it does now, beneath the auspices of the Grand Orient of France; two lodges—those of the "Sectateurs de Menses," and "The Temple of the Families," holding their communication in the Masonic Palace, No. 16, Rue Cadet,—the Grand Lodge Hall of the Orient.

I received from the Executive Body the highest degree of the Rite, with letters patent, authorizing me to establish on the Continent of America, "A SOVEREIGN GRAND SANCTUARY OF CONSERVATORS GENERAL OF THE ORDER," whose jurisdiction should embrace the entire Western Hemisphere, with collateral power to erect, until the establishment of the Sovereign Grand Sanctuary, Sovereign Grand Councils General, for the better government of subsidiary territory throughout America.

On my return to this city, I deemed it advisable to inaugurate the Rite, under those letters patent, embracing all the Eastern States.

The foregoing quotation is from a four-page leaflet published by Seymour and is given verbatim because the story differs from that which is related in the

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Figure 2. Harry J. Seymour, 96–33°, Past Grand Master General of the Rite of Memphis, was expelled from the Supreme Council, 33°, N.M.J. in 1865 for “gross un-Masonic conduct.” From *The Constitution and General Statutes for the Government of the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Freemasonry....* (New York: Excelsior Printing Co., 1874).

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*Official Bulletin du Grand Orient de France*, 1864, page 511, where we learn that he was not admitted to the Rite until November 12, 1864. On the other hand, documents signed by Seymour are quoted in various publications which have earlier dates. In addition, the Library of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts has the 90° certificate of Charles S. Stratton, better known as General Tom Thumb, which is signed by Seymour as "Sov.: Grand Master Chief Sup.: " and is dated October 5, 1864. Further confusion is added to the story because there is evidence that the Grand Orient of France recognized the Rite of Memphis as late as 1867, it being listed in their Official Bulletin for that year.

What is still more baffling to the present-day historians is the fact that we find among the membership of the Rite of Memphis many members of the Supreme Council 33°, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, N.M.J., among them Orrin Welch, John L. Lewis, John W. Simons, and Clinton F. Paige of New York, and General Samuel C. Lawrence and Daniel W. Lawrence of Massachusetts, all those holding high position in Scottish Rite Masonry.

This, however, is not so surprising as it appears at first sight. At that time "side degrees" of all kinds were very common, and it was not at all unusual for prominent Masons to be recipients of such degrees. Seymour doubtless sought the membership of men of this type to give prestige to his Rite. Later on, when the legitimacy of the rite came to be questioned, we find these same men renouncing their membership therein, as will be shown presently.

The Grand Orient of France never recognized the patent issued to Seymour by Marconis in 1862. The position of the Grand Orient is clearly defined in a letter written to the Supreme Council 33°, Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, February 24, 1870. It reads thus:

T :: T :: G :: O :: T :: G :: A :: O :: T :: UNIVERSE

Grand Orient of France  
O.: of Paris, Feb. 24, 1870 (E.:V.:)

*Very Honorable Brother:*

Bro. Poule desires me to reply to a letter which you have addressed to him for the purpose of knowing if Bro. Marconis in the character of Grand Hierophant of the Rite of Memphis has the right to create Masons of that Rite in America, and to confer there the 33d degree of the Scottish Rite, etc.; and inquiring if he does this with the knowledge and consent of the Grand Orient of France. I hasten to reply not so much to these different questions as to all which can arise in relation to the subject.

Behold, then, all the truth in relation to the Rite of Memphis and Bro. Marconis. That Brother, at a certain time, decreed himself chief of a new

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Rite—the Rite of Memphis—to which he gave 96 degrees. He travelled, propagated his Rite in different countries, and returned to France, where he made dupes in founding three lodges. The police shut up these three lodges. The members of these three lodges were considered to be honest and well-meaning men.

They addressed themselves to the Grand Orient which annexed to itself the Rite of Memphis without recognizing its series of grades; it regularized the Memphis Masons, in recognizing them as Masons of the grade of Master only. Bro. Marconis divested himself of all rights in relation to his Rite, and transferred his powers to the Grand Orient of France, happy apparently to see that the Rite, which he has created, did not perish.

But we counted in vain upon his good faith and upon his oath. That Brother continued clandestinely to give the high grades to isolated Masons, addressing himself especially to strangers, and saying that his renunciation had effect only for France. Indigence impelled him into that bad faith. The Grand Orient wished to come to his aid; he replied that he was not poor. The Grand Orient had the right to proceed against him; it had pity upon an old man; it oriented itself with warning its lodges against his intrigues. The Bulletin of the Grand Orient, which you receive, contains many resolutions upon that subject. See your 1866, pages 123, 146; year 1867, page 332; year 1868, pages 444, 467, 593. Finally, Bro. Marconis died in 1869; we hope that he will have no successor, and that the Rite of Memphis will trouble us no longer. Already it has entirely disappeared from France. It is not maintained in Europe, save in some localities of Roumania, where it also tends to disappear, thanks to our incessant efforts.

These explanations, clear as well as concise, will give you the proof that it is not permitted to anybody in America, to invoke the name and authority of the Grand Orient of France in anything which concerns the Rite of Memphis. Nothing of what is done, or of anyone who does it, in its name, concerning that Rite is true. And I pronounce anyone an imposter who pretends to act in the name of the Grand Orient in the affairs of that Rite.

I hope, very dear and very honorable brother, that these experiences will be of some use to you. In that hope, I pray you to accept the assurance of my most fraternal sentiments.

The Chief of the Secretariat,

THÉVENOT

To the HON. BRO. DRUMMOND, *Portland*.<sup>18</sup>

Whatever powers Marconis de Negre may have had prior to his surrender of the Rite of Memphis to the Grand Orient of France in 1862, they were surrendered by that act. This not only includes his own position as Grand Hierophant of the Rite, but all the powers he had previously created or given to others. Regardless of the validity of the patent issued by him to Seymour in 1862, such

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patent became of no effect when the entire custody of the Rite was turned over to the Grand Orient in November of that year.

No one who has made a study of the Rite of Memphis—and it should be said that this article covers only the “high lights”—will deny that the Rite of Memphis maintained considerable activity during the 1860s and up to the early 1880s. It had, however, fallen into the hands of Masonic charlatans and impostors who used it with more or less success to further their own selfish ends. Authority was claimed and assumed by various individuals without the slightest semblance of legality.

The growth of the Rite during the period from 1856 to 1867 can be attributed in a large degree to the difficulties which existed in the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite. Due to dissensions, there existed from 1860 to 1863 three bodies each claiming to be the legitimate Supreme Council for that Rite. Two of these united in 1863, and a final “Reunion” of the two remaining Supreme Councils occurred in 1867, since which time harmony has prevailed throughout the jurisdiction.

After the final union of the two existing Supreme Councils in 1867, Harry J. Seymour altered the Rite of Memphis from a  $96^{\circ}$  system to one of  $33^{\circ}$ . He claimed that the Grand Orient of France had ordered this change, but this claim rests upon a most insecure foundation. The Grand Orient strenuously denies that they ever authorized the practice of any degrees of this rite, further than the third, or that of Master. All authority over degrees above the third was vested in the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, and whatever action the Grand Orient took with the propagation of such degrees was in the name of that Rite and not the Rite of Memphis, all of whose degrees were buried in the archives of the Grand Orient from the time that Marconis placed it under their aegis.

That Seymour utilized the Rite of Memphis as a money-making scheme is shown by the fact that he gave these degrees in Washington, D.C. without charge except that each who received them should take a diploma from him and pay five dollars for it.<sup>19</sup>

Viewed from the American standpoint, Seymour’s change in the system was obviously an attempt to create a rival body to the Scottish Rite Supreme Council from which he had been expelled. That the members of the Northern Supreme Council considered it as such is evidenced by the following notice which appeared in newspapers in New York and elsewhere: (Under caption “CARD”):

NEW YORK, Nov. 30, 1867

The undersigned members of the Ancient and Accepted Rite of Freemasonry, and attached to the Supreme Council of the Northern Jurisdiction by active and honorary membership, claiming their allegiance to that

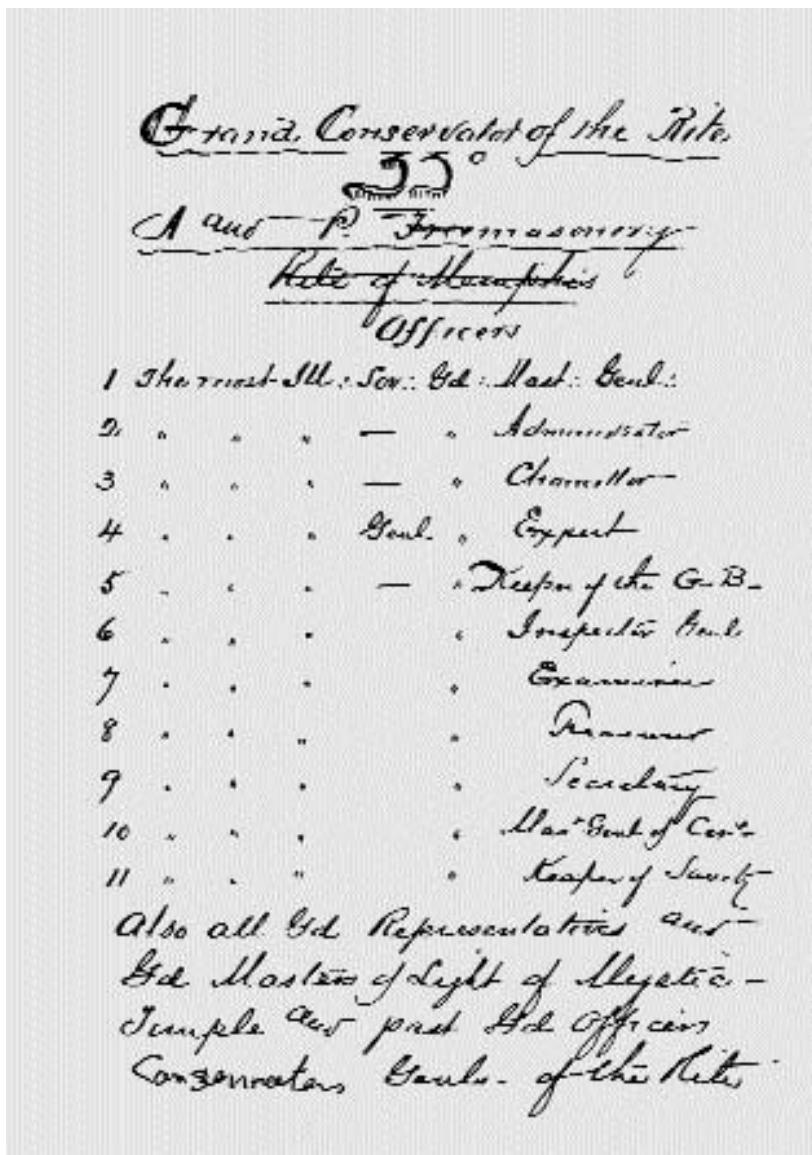


Figure 3. The first page of Harry J. Seymour's unpublished "Grand Conservator of the Rite 33" ritual. Seymour reduced the Rite of Memphis to a system of thirty-three degrees in order to compete with the Scottish Rite. Courtesy of the Grand College of Rites of the United States of America.

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body as superior to any other system of ineffable Masonry, have dissolved their connection with Harry J. Seymour and the A. and P. Rite of Memphis; and hereby declare unauthorized the further use of our names in connection therewith.

JOHN W. SIMONS, 33°

CLINTON F. PAIGE, 33°

ORRIN WELCH, 33°

JOHN L. LEWIS, 33°<sup>20</sup>

Seymour's alteration of the system brought still further dissension in his own ranks. Calvin C. Burt, 96°, who had been Deputy Grand Master of the Rite since 1865, issued a call May 4, 1867, for a convention of the Rite of Memphis, at Chicago, Illinois, which met June 17, 1867. The resolutions adopted by this convention read, in part:

And whereas, we have been notified by the aforesaid Grand Master (H. J. Seymour), that the Grand Orient of France has reduced the degrees to 33....

And whereas, we are informed that our worthy and Illustrious Brother and Deputy Grand Master, Calvin C. Burt, 96°, has not accepted the change, and does not believe that such powers exist in the Rite, and that the adoption of such a reduction will be attended with bad results....

Resolved that we will not acknowledge or subscribe any such reduction of degrees....<sup>21</sup>

A new governing body of the Rite of Memphis was accordingly established with Calvin C. Burt as Grand Master. Meetings were held in 1868, 1871, 1874, and 1878 in various western cities, the records of these meetings showing that several bodies of the Rite had been established and had a considerable membership.<sup>22</sup>

Burt, too, had a rather hectic Masonic career. He was expelled by the Grand Lodge of New Jersey in 1866, charges having been preferred in 1864, but in 1868 the action of the Grand Lodge was rescinded on a purely technical point, namely that sufficient time had not elapsed between service of notice on Burt and the time of his trial. In 1878 Grand Master Finch of Michigan issued an edict warning the fraternity of that state against accepting the petition for affiliation of Burt in any Lodge in that Jurisdiction.<sup>23</sup>

While all this was occurring the genuine Sovereign Sanctuary of America became dissatisfied with the conduct of Harry J. Seymour, and the Grand Officers determined to purchase him out at a cost of 3,000 dollars. Seymour took the dollars, resigned his office to the Sovereign Sanctuary of America, with all patents, charters, rituals, documents and privileges whatsoever, and notified same to the world. Upon this the Sov. Sanctuary elected as its Grand Master an honourable and high-minded gentleman, Professor Alexander B. Mott, 33-96°....

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Fraternalally Yours &  
Calvin C. Burt 96 & M.R. of all  
Grand Master Ad Vitam

Figure 4. Calvin C. Burt, 96°, was Seymour's Deputy Grand Master, but refused to accept the reduction in degrees. Burt organized his own branch of the Rite of Memphis and served as Grand Master Ad Vitam. From *Egyptian Masonic History of the Original and Unabridged Ancient and Ninety-six (96°) Degree Rite of Memphis* (Utica, N.Y.: 1879)

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The next step in the farce was as follows. The spurious Egyptian Rite of Memphis, presided over by Calvin C. Burt, became dissatisfied with their chief, and he (Burt) agreed to sell out to Darius Wilson for 1,000 dollars. A small hole-and-corner meeting, the circular of Brother Lord [of whom more anon] informs us, was held by a few members who were favorable to Darius Wilson—about eight we believe—who were said to represent 506 Chapters and 10,319 members, which was probably a mathematical calculation of what they might expect to get before the world came to an end. But a remainder of the prospective ten thousand members refused to agree to Darius Wilson's purchase of the Rite, and elected Judge Parrish as their Grand Master. Thus there came into existence two spurious branches of the Rite; besides which Calvin C. Burt continued to confer degrees. This led to a judicial tribunal in which Wilson expelled Burt.... The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts formally endorsed the assertion that Wilson is running the Rite to make money, and expelled him from the Craft.<sup>24</sup>

A Grand Mystic Temple had been chartered in Canada by Alexander B. Mott. The Canadian members declared themselves independent, organized a Sovereign Sanctuary, and chartered a body of the Rite of Misraim in the United States, with W. B. Lord of Utica, New York as Grand Master. Mott claimed that all rights to the Rite of Misraim in the United States belonged to him by virtue of his office as Grand Master of the Rite of Memphis.<sup>25</sup> This led to much controversy with both Lord and Mott strongly asserting their authority.

Wilson went on conferring the degrees of the Rite of Memphis, and, in addition, the three Craft degrees and, as a consequence, was expelled by the Grand Lodge of New York in 1904 for illegally conferring these degrees under claimed authority from the clandestine "Grand Lodge of Ohio" which had been organized as a rival to the legitimate Grand Lodge of that state.<sup>26</sup> About 1900 he merged his branch of the Rite of Memphis with that of Isaac H. Parrish and W. B. Lord, under the name of the "Royal Masonic Rite." This body never assumed any real importance and soon passed into oblivion.

Dr. Alexander B. Mott, head of the Seymour branch of the Rite, died in 1889. He was succeeded by Harvey G. Goodale.<sup>27</sup> In September, 1914, Goodale turned over all the papers and control of the Rite to Ellis B. Guild, who kept control until just before he died on May 13, 1921. There are several claimants to Guild's authority, but so far as can be ascertained, this branch of the Rite is now entirely dormant, or we might say is "a Shadow body."

It is worthy of note that practically all those who have been actively engaged in the promotion of the Rite of Memphis have been prominently identified with other spurious Masonic Bodies. Seymour was one of the prime movers in the revival of the clandestine Cerneau Scottish Rite. Burt and Wilson were connected with clandestine Craft lodges. Mott was, in 1888, Grand Lieutenant

THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

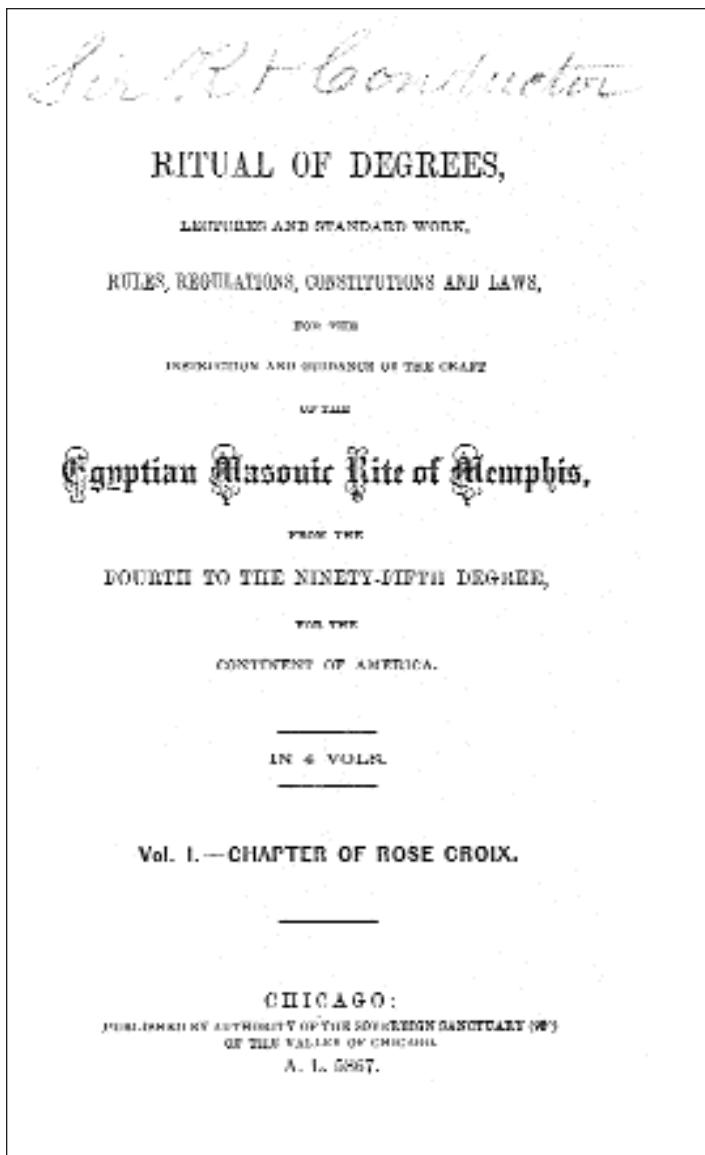


Figure 5. Title page of Calvin C. Burt's *Ritual of Degrees* (1867). Many of the Rite of Memphis rituals were plagiarized from and were slightly modified versions of the Scottish Rite Degrees. Courtesy of the Grand College of Rites of the United States of America.

Commander of the so-called Cerneau Supreme Council.<sup>28</sup> Guild was also identified with this illegal Scottish Rite organization. Many other instances might be cited, but those already given will suffice.

#### GRAND LODGES FROWN UPON SPURIOUS RITES AND DEGREES

While the various State Grand Lodges admit that Chapters of Royal Arch Masons, Councils of Royal & Select Masters, Commanderies of Knights Templar, and bodies of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, working under the authority of regular Grand Bodies, are a part of legitimate Masonry, they have quite generally taken the stand that such organizations as the Rites of Misraim and Memphis have no legal status, and a number of them, by constitutional amendment or edict of the Grand Master, have forbidden members of their Lodges in their jurisdiction to associate themselves in any way with such organizations.

In 1882, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts amended its constitution (section 25) to read as follows:

Any Mason in this jurisdiction who shall confer, communicate, or sell, or assist in conferring, communicating or selling, or solicit anyone to receive or apply for, any so-called Masonic degree or degree limited to Freemasons, not hereinbefore recognized or admitted, may be expelled from all the rights and privileges of Masonry.

The degrees excepted are those conferred in the bodies named in the preceding paragraph.

Section 507 of the *Constitution* of the Grand Lodge of New York says:

As the true and legitimate source of Masonic authority and the supreme and sovereign Masonic body in this Grand Jurisdiction, this Grand Lodge recognizes as Masonic only those organizations or bodies which it shall declare so to be or with which it is in Masonic affiliation. Any Mason under the jurisdiction of this Grand Lodge who shall hereafter take or receive, confer or be present at, or assist in the conferring of any degree, grade or order, in or under the authority of any organization or body claiming to be Masonic, or which uses or employs in its ceremonies, either directly or indirectly, or by reference to or otherwise, any part of the esoteric work, signs or symbols of the three degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry, and which is not declared to be recognized as such Masonic organization or body by this Grand Lodge, is guilty of a Masonic offence.

The Section following the above lists the same bodies as previously referred to as duly recognized.

One of the most sweeping edicts against the Rite of Memphis is that adopted by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, which is given in full below.

## THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### THE CLANDESTINE RITE OF MEMPHIS

The following edict of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania has just been issued, and is being sent to all of the Lodges in the jurisdiction, and each Lodge is required to send a copy of the edict to every member:

#### GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA, *June 30, 1890–5890*

At the Quarterly Communication held the 4th instant, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted:

“WHEREAS, the so-called ‘Egyptian Rite of Memphis’ has been decided by the R. W. Grand Master of Masons of Pennsylvania to be *not* a Masonic Body, and not entitled to occupy a Masonic Hall, dedicated to Free-Masonry; and whereas the so called ‘Egyptian Masonic Rite of Memphis’ is its title unlawfully asserts that it is a Masonic Body; and whereas the said Rite unlawfully addresses its certificates issued to its members, to ‘all Masons throughout the Globe,’ and whereas the said Rite, in its constitution and official history, compiled and published by its so-called Grand Master, unlawfully asserts that its so-called Grand Master ‘shall always possess the right and have the power to make Masons on sight.’ therefore

“Resolved, That the so-called ‘Egyptian Masonic Rite of Memphis’ is Masonically a clandestine Body.

“Resolved, That an edict of the R. W. Grand Lodge be issued declaring the so-called ‘Egyptian Masonic Rite of Memphis’ to be clandestine, and notifying and requiring all brethren, Free and Accepted Masons, in the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania to sever their connection with and renounce their allegiance to said Rite within ninety days from this 4th day of June, A.L. 5890.”

In order that the proper force and effect may be given to this action of Grand Lodge, you are hereby directed to have this edict read in open Lodge at its next stated meeting and copied in full in its minutes, and to cause a copy thereof to be sent to each member of the Lodge.

All brethren who are now members of any Body appertaining to, constituting or derived from the so-called “Egyptian Masonic Rite of Memphis” are hereby required to sever their connection with and renounce their allegiance to said Rite within ninety days from the 4th day of June, 1890, and to notify the Masonic Lodge of which they are members of their renunciation.

And all brethren, Free and Accepted Masons, who shall be found to be and remain members of said clandestine Rite after the said-mentioned

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date, are hereby notified that they will thereupon forthwith be liable to Masonic trial and punishment, in conformity with Masonic law in such case made and provided.

By order of the R. W. Grand Master.

MICHAEL NISBET,

*Grand Secretary.*<sup>29</sup>

Many other Grand Lodges have taken similar action, but as the constitutional provision in each of these cases is practically the same as the ones already cited it is unnecessary to mention them in detail.

**UNFOUNDED CLAIMS OF THE RITE OF MEMPHIS**

There is ample evidence that the Rite of Memphis laid claim to the 33rd Degree of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, and held that those who had received this degree of the Rite of Memphis should be acknowledged as legitimate Thirty-Third Degree Masons of the Scottish Rite.

At the Annual Meeting of the Supreme Council of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction for 1870, three members of Hope Lodge No. 244, F. & A.M. of New York City, namely James M. Rabbs, John J. Gorman, and Willard C. Black, presented a memorial asking that they receive recognition as 33rd Degree Masons of the A.A.S.R., they having received the Thirty-Third Degree according to the Rite of Memphis. This memorial was referred to a special committee, which reported that "it is evident that these brethren have been victims of imposture," and that "the prayer cannot be granted without an entire departure from the principles and safeguards of the Rite.... Their only remedy is to seek the grade which they suppose themselves to possess, through the proper and legitimate channels." Their names do not appear in the list of members of the Supreme Council, so the distinction they sought was not conferred upon them. John J. Gorman later became Sovereign Grand Commander of the so-called revived Cerneau Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite.<sup>30</sup>

**LATER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES**

In 1914 we find one Ellis B. Guild posing as Sovereign Grand Master of the Rite of Memphis for the United States of America. Guild died some ten years ago, and at present [1936] there are at least four claimants to the Supreme Authority over the organization, some holding that they derive authority from Seymour, through direct descent, others that they derive authority from Burt through Wilson and Parrish, and still another claiming authority from Italy. In addition, at least one group claims a French origin of recent years—this, of course, could not possibly have any basis of fact, as seen in the early part of this treatment.

## THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

Between 1890 and 1896, Jacques Ochs, a Rumanian, claimed authority from the National Grand Lodge of Rumania to establish masonic lodges in the United States. His authority was revoked, and he then appeared as a Representative of the Grand Orient of Spain for the Rite of "Memphis and Misraim," and established lodges in New York which he told the initiates were regular masonic bodies in which they could get all the degrees at low rates. His operations extended to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Chicago, Illinois, where he found numerous dupes at so much per capita. He was denounced by regular masonic authorities, and soon found himself under arrest, after which the bodies he had founded soon ceased to exist. This was simply another case of a clever degree-peddler preying upon credulity and ignorance. The Ochs Rite of "Memphis and Misraim" was not the Marconis Rite, but evidently some invention of his own.

There was also a short-lived Egyptian Masonic Rite of Memphis for the Cosmos in Boston, Massachusetts, about 1881, and there are records of an Ancient and Primitive (Spanish) Rite of Memphis and Misraim at New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago about 1890-95, which had no connection with the Rite established here by Marconis.<sup>31</sup> Evidence of continued activities of this old Boston rite, or a revival of one of Wilson's various activities, was found in recent years. The prime mover is a man who headed a clandestine Massachusetts symbolic lodge, as shown by court records in the archives of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. The testimony in the legal prosecution of the frauds is interesting reading.

Matthew McBlain Thompson, of American Masonic Federation notoriety, also included the Rites of Memphis and Misrain in his list of Orders or degrees, as is shown by his testimony in the trial at Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1922, when he was convicted of fraudulent use of the mails of the United States, fined \$5,000, and sentenced to serve two years in the Federal Penitentiary. His pretension to Scottish recognition was exposed by testimony showing that the Grand Lodge of Scotland does not recognize these Rites as belonging to Freemasonry.<sup>32</sup>

### THE RITE OF MEMPHIS IN ENGLAND

On October 24, 1859, W. Grey Clarke, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of England, issued a circular (see *The Freemason*, September 23, 1871) directing Masters of Lodges to see that no member of the "Reformed Order of Memphis, or Rite of the Grand Lodge of Philadelphes" should be admitted to any Lodge, and asking them to remind the members of their lodges that they could hold no communication with irregular lodges without incurring the penalty of expulsion from the Order, and the liability of being proceeded against under the Act 39, George III, for taking part in the meetings of illegal secret societies.

In the same issue of *The Freemason*, there appeared a letter from Meyer and Lowenstark, which stated that the Antient and Primitive Rite of Memphis, late-

ly introduced into England by B. D. Hyam, Past Grand Master of Masons of California, U.S.A., had no connection with the spurious body named.

In *The Freemason* of October 7, 1871, we find this note, "We are requested to state that the Rite of Memphis is not and never has been recognized by the Grand Orient of France and Further, that it is viewed as an imposture by the heads of the Masonic Order in America, who have reportedly denounced the reputed 'Sovereign of Memphis,' Harry J. Seymour and his colleague, not only as spurious Masons, but of men unworthy of credit in every respect. We are informed that the rite is impious and atheistical in its teachings and that active measures are on foot to expose the iniquity of its proceedings."

Again we find in *The Freemason* of October 19, 1872, page 644, an editorial stating that the Grand Orient of France desired to absorb the Rite of Memphis and so wipe out what it considered an anomaly and a disgrace to the Craft.

According to Brother Dudley Wright, all doubt as to the illegality of the Antient and Primitive Rite had been settled on April 12 and 13, 1871, when a concordat was arrived at between the Ancient and Accepted Rite for England, Wales, and the Dominions and Dependencies of the British Crown, the Grand Lodge of Mark Mater Masons of England, Wales, etc., and the Great Priory of the United Religious and Military Orders of the Temple of England and Wales, by which any member of these three bodies becoming or continuing a member of the Antient and Primitive Rite was ipso facto excluded from any or all of these bodies.<sup>33</sup>

Despite this decree, a charter was granted, in 1872, for a Sovereign Grand Body for Great Britain and Ireland, which was formally inaugurated by Harry J. Seymour, Grand Master General of the United States. Most prominently identified with the movement was John Yarker. He had previously been invested with the degrees by Benjamin D. Hyam, under patent from Harry J. Seymour and was installed as Grand Mater General of Great Britain and Ireland. Charters were granted for Chapters in London, Manchester, Havant, and Dublin. Later bodies were warranted for Burnley and Aberdeenshire.<sup>34</sup>

At this time the number of degrees of the Rite had been officially reduced by Seymour to thirty-three (from ninety-six), but according to a letter from John Yarker permission was granted to the various bodies to work such other side-degrees as they might desire, if in accord with the old system.<sup>35</sup>

John Yarker was the prime moving spirit of the Rite in England. He was a Masonic student of some repute and a writer of no mean ability. He seemed, however, to have a penchant for erratic quasi-Masonic organizations, including the Rite of Swedenborg, of which he was Supreme Grand Master for the United Kingdom, the Sat Bhai of Prague, and various other mystic and occult institutions.<sup>36</sup> He also signed himself "F.S.Sc. (London)." This was a pseudo-scientific

THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

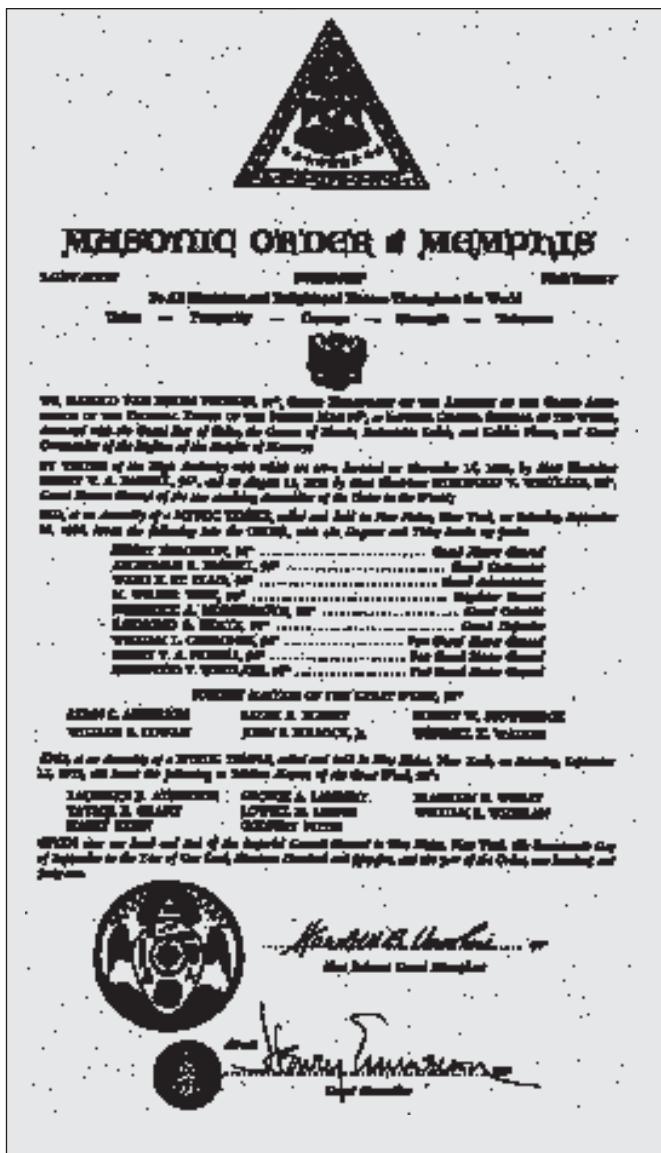


Figure 6. Patent issued on September 17, 1955, by the last Sovereign Sanctuary of the Rite of Memphis in the United States (referred to in Appendix 2). The Sovereign Sanctuary transferred its powers and authority to the Grand College of Rites of the United States of America. From the Archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J., Washington, D.C.

society started by an Albert Sturman who at one time kept a private boys school in London and also acted as an agent for the sale of bogus degrees produced on this side of the Atlantic. This “Society” for a considerable time was listed in the cautionary column of the London *Truth*. After Sturman’s death, his wife, who was really the active partner in the business, carried on with some success.<sup>37</sup>

In 1870, the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of England issued a Balustre giving notice of the expulsion of John Yarker, 18°, for un-Masonic conduct.<sup>38</sup>

The Rite of Memphis never gained any great foothold in England, although bodies were reported as working in Liverpool and the Isle of Man at comparatively recent dates. The 1934 “revival” in Belgium, which recognized the Yarker charters, is obviously irregular and has no standing. A periodical called *The Kneph*, devoted to the interests of the Rite, was edited first by Kenneth R. H. MacKenzie and afterward by John Yarker. This was succeeded by another periodical entitled *The Zuzimuth*, which was very short-lived.

#### SUMMARY

The Rites of Misraim and Memphis have been a thorn in the side of legitimate Freemasonry every since their inception. For the most part they have been exploited by Masonic adventurers, many of whom had been expelled from free-masonry, for their own personal profit. Since 1862 it has been under the control of the Grand Orient of France which has never authorized its working beyond the first three degrees, and in these only to such lodges of the Rite as had previously been established, all of which soon abandoned it.

It appears that Marconis acted in bad faith with the Grand Orient, and that, after the Rite had been taken under its protection, claimed that his renunciation of his authority to the Grand Orient had been for France only, and proceeded to issue alleged authority for its promulgation in other countries to Seymour and others.

These rites never formed any part of legitimate Freemasonry. Its rituals are a mass of anachronisms, distorted history, inaccurate science, and jumbled philosophy. Being issued in printed form, they are quite common and easy to access. To pay money to anyone for the conferring of these degrees is a case of a “fool and his money.” Whatever abstract interest they may have for the student of ritual, they are of no practical utility and properly belong in a library of masonic curios.

## THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

### NOTES

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2. Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, rev. Robert I. Clegg, 2 vols. (New York: Masonic History Co., 1929), under Rites.
3. François Timoléon Bègue Clavel, *Histoire Pittoresque de la Franc-Maçonnerie et de Societes Secretes Ancienne et Modernes* (Paris: 1843), p. 259.
4. Albert Pike, *Of Cerneauism* (New York, 1886), p. 15.
5. Pike, *Of Cerneauism* p. 15.
6. Albert Pike, *Cerneauism and Foulhouzism Scourged* (New York: 1885), p. 11.
7. Albert C. Stevens, *Cyclopedia of Fraternities* (New York & Patterson, N.J.: Hamilton Printing, 1899), p. 78.
8. *Bulletin of the Grand Orient of France*, Nov. 1862, p. 419.
9. *Bulletin of the Grand Orient of France*, p. 420.
10. *Bulletin of the Grand Orient of France*, p. 420.
11. *Bulletin of the Grand Orient of France*, p. 420.
12. *Bulletin of the Grand Orient of France*, p. 420.
13. *Freimaurer-Zeitung*, 1861, no. 10; also *Latomia*, vol. XX, p. 176.
14. *Bulletin of the Grand Orient of France*, Nov. 1862, p. 420.
15. *Reprint of the Proceedings of the Supreme Council, 33°, A.: and A.: Scottish Rite, N.M.J.*, vol. 1, part III, 1859–1862 (Portland: Stephen Berry, Printer, 1876), p. 133 and following.
16. *Bulletin of the Grand Orient of France* Nov. 1862, pp. 421–22; also *Proceedings N.M.J.*, 1870, pp. 29–30.
17. *Proceedings, N.M.J.*, 1866 (reprint 1875).
18. *Proceedings, N.M.J.*, 1870, pp. 29–30.
19. Pike, *Of Cerneauism*, p. 64.
20. This card is reproduced in Calvin C. Burt, *Egyptian Masonic History of the Original and Unabridged Ancient and Ninety-Six (96) Degree Rite of Memphis* (Utica, N.Y.: White & Floyd, 5879 [1879]), p. 116.
21. Burt, *History*, pp. 3–4.

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22. Burt, *History*, pp. 3–4.
23. *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Michigan*, 1880.
24. *The Kneph* (Official Organ of the A. & P. Rite in Great Britain), vol. IV, no. 2 (May 1864), p. 124.
25. *The Kneph*, May 1884, p. 124.
26. *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of New York*, 1904, pp. 270–71
27. *The Kneph*, Sep. 1890, p. 46.
28. *New York Star*, Jun. 9, 1888.
29. *Occasional Bulletin, Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction*, no. 11, Mar. 1891, pp. 36–37.
30. *Proceedings, N.M.J.*, 1870 , p. 108.
31. Stevens, *Cyclopedie*, p. 50.
32. Evans, *Fraud*, pp. 84, 134, 176, 212, & 243.
33. *The Master Mason*, vol. VI, no. 10 (Oct. 1929).
34. *The Master Mason*, pp. 663 and following.
35. *The Freemason*, London, Dec. 11, 1886.
36. *The Kneph*, vol. 11, no. 15 (Mar. 1882), p. 114.
37. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, May 29, 1909.
38. *Proceedings, N.M.J.*, 1871, pp. 32–33.

THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

A P P E N D I X   1

*Proceedings held in the matter of the organization of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the United States of America, its Dependencies and Territories of the Egyptian Masonic Rite of Memphis.*

Brother Henry V.A. Parsell of New York, N.Y., holding Patent of the 95th Degree, dated April 24, 1906, signed by Harvey G. Goodale, 96°, M. I. Sov. Grand Master General, John S. Phillips, 95°, Grand Chancellor General and Edgar F. Stewart, 95°, Grand Secretary General, acting as Grand Hierophant 96° of the Sovereign Sanctuary for the United States of America, etc., conferred the 45° on J. Raymond Shute II of Monroe, North Carolina, **FEB. 10, 1931.**

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ON OCTOBER 2, 1931 the said Henry V.A. Parsell elevated Bro. George Winslow Plummer of New York, N.Y. to 95°.

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ON OCTOBER 3, 1931 the said Henry V. A. Parsell issued a Dispensation to Bro. J. Raymond Shute II to invest Brothers W. C. Crowell, Monroe, N.C.; Michael Saliba, Wilson, N.C.; Kennon W. Parham, Raleigh, N.C.; and J. Edward Allen, Warrenton, N.C.; and such others as eligible, with the 18° and 45°. The four Brethren named in the Dispensation were so invested in the City of Durham, N.C. on October 9, 1931, the said J. Raymond Shute II acting as Most Wise of the Chapter, 18° and Commander of the Senate, 45°, Valley of New York, Orient of New York, Sanctuary of America, etc.

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A meeting was held at Washington, D.C. on OCTOBER 22, 1931, being called to order at 11 o'clock A.M. for the purpose of reviving the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Egyptian Masonic Rite of Memphis. Brother H. V. A. Parsell, having called said meeting, acted as Chairman.

Brother Parsell exhibited his letters patent and duly and solemnly conferred the 90° of the E. M. R. of M. on Brother J. Raymond Shute II and J. Edward Allen. Brothers Shute and Allen then exhibited proxies from Brothers M. Saliba, K. W. Parham, and W. C. Crowell, all of the 45°.

Brother Parsell thereupon invested each of the above named brethren with the rank and dignity of the 95° of the E. M. R. of M., and the members present then proceeded to organize a Sovereign Sanctuary, as an act of reviving same.

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Brother Henry V. A. Parsell was thereupon duly and unanimously elected Grand Hierophant. Brother J. Edward Allen was duly elected Sublime Scribe. Brother J. Raymond Shute II was duly elected Grand Chancellor.

It was resolved that the remaining officers be appointed by the Grand Hierophant and installed later by him.

Brother K. W. Parham was appointed Committee on Finance; Brother J. Raymond Shute was appointed Committee on Foreign Affairs; Bro. George W. Plummer was appointed Committee on Ritual and Brother J. Edward Allen was appointed Committee on General Purposes. The Sovereign Sanctuary then adopted temporary by-laws to control its activities until permanent by-laws and activities were defined. It was resolved that the members present shall at the next meeting draft a constitution and by-laws for this Sovereign Sanctuary.

The Sovereign Sanctuary was then duly closed.

(signed) J. EDWARD ALLEN, 95°

*Sublime Scribe.*

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ON NOVEMBER 14, 1931, the said Henry V. A. Parsell, Grand Hierophant, 96° elevated and invested Brother Harold V. B. Voorhis of Red Bank, N.J. with 18°, 45°, 90° and 95°.

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ON NOVEMBER 2, 1931, the said Henry V. A. Parsell, Grand Hierophant, 96°, issued a Dispensation to J. Raymond Shute, 95° to convoke the Sovereign Sanctuary in the Valley of Charlotte, North Carolina on December 18, 1931 and to invest Brothers Frank M. Pinnix, Luther T. Hartsell, Jr., William B. Hodge and John H. Anderson, all of North Carolina, with the 18°, 45°, 90° and 95°, to wit:

Frank M. Pinnix, Oxford, N.C.

Luther T. Hartsell, Jr., Concord, N.C.

William B. Hodge, Charlotte, N.C.

John B. Anderson, Raleigh, N.C.

J. Hugo Tatsch, New York, N.Y.

The Sovereign Sanctuary was then duly closed by Rt. Worthy Brother J. Raymond Shute II, 95°, acting as Grand Hierophant.

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## THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

ON MAY 12, 1932 the Sovereign Sanctuary of the E. M. R. of M. was opened at 2,400–16th Street, N.W. at Washington, District of Columbia—9:35 P.M.

The Grand Hierophant, Henry V. A. Parsell, 96° presided and the following other members of the Sovereign Sanctuary were present:

J. Edward Allen	John H. Anderson
Luther T. Hartsell, Jr.	William B. Hodge
Kennon W. Parham	J. Raymond Shute II
J. Hugo Tatsch	Harold V. B. Voorhis

It was regularly moved and carried unanimously that the Sovereign Sanctuary surrender the Sovereignty of its three Rites for the purpose of being absorbed by the Grand College of Rites for the United States of America about to be formed.

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### E. M. R. OF M. LIST OF FOUNDERS—*According to Seniority of 95°*

1 – Henry V.A. Parsell	April 24, 1906
2 – George Winslow Plummer	October 2, 1931
3 – J. Raymond Shute II	October 22, 1931
4 – J. Edward Allen	October 22, 1931
5 – Michael Saliba	October 22, 1931
6 – Kennon W. Parham	October 22, 1931
7 – Walter C. Crowell	October 22, 1931
8 – Harold V. B. Voorhis	November 14, 1931
9 – J. Hugo Tatsch	December 18, 1931
10 – Frank M. Pinnix	December 18, 1931
11 – Luther T. Hartsell, Jr.	December 18, 1931
12 – William B. Hodge	December 18, 1931
13 – John H. Anderson	December 18, 1931

*Harold V. B. Voorhis 95° E. M. R. OF M.*

*Grand Registrar – Grand College of Rites*

ALBERT PIKE & WILLIAM L. CUMMINGS

THE GRAND COLLEGE OF RITES  
*for the*  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## MINUTES OF CONVOCATION - MAY 12, 1932

The formation meeting of the Grand College of Rites convened at 2400-16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. at 9:25 P.M. on the above date.

*Present:* J. Edward Allen, N.C. Kennon W. Parham, N.C.  
John H. Anderson, N.C. Luther T. Hartsell, Jr., N.C.  
William B. Hodge, N.C. Henry V. A. Parsell, N.Y.  
J. Ray Shute, N.C. J. Hugo Tatsch, N.Y.  
Harold V. B. Voorhis, N.J.

Thereupon Brother Henry V. A. Parsell was elected Chairman and Brother Harold V. B. Voorhis, Secretary of the Convention by unanimous consent.

It was resolved that it was expedient to form the Grand College of Rites, which resolution was unanimously adopted.

The proposed Constitution was then read for adoption by articles and after various changes had been made, it was regularly moved and carried that the Grand Registrar be granted authority to write the Preamble to the Constitution.

It was regularly moved and carried that the rank of Past Grand Chancellor be conferred upon Brother Henry V. A. Parsell in recognition of his services to the establishment of this Grand College of Rites.

It was regularly moved and carried that the Grand Registrar cast one ballot when there was but one nomination in the election of officers.

Election resulted in the following selections:

Grand Chancellor	J. EDWARD ALLEN
Grand Vice-Chancellor	J. RAYMOND SHUTE II
Grand Registrar	HAROLD V. B. VOORHIS
Grand Prelate	HENRY V. A. PARSELL, P.G.C.
Grand Redactor-General	J. HUGO TATSCH
Grand Archivist	LUTHER HARTSELL, JR.
Grand Seneschal	WILLIAM B. HODGE
Grand Marischal	JOHN H. ANDERSON

THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

The Grand Marischal made the proclamation and J. Edward Allen, Grand Chancellor took the status of the presiding officer.

It was agreed that the next annual convocation would be held in Washington, D.C. during the week of February 22, 1933

The minutes were approved, and the Grand Chancellor closed the Grand College of Rites.

Harold V. B. Voorhis F.G.C.R.

*Grand Registrar*

APPENDIX 2

*Minutes of the Sovereign Sanctuary, Ancient & Primitive Rite of Memphis, showing the filial descent of the Rite, from its beginning in France, to its final absorption by the Grand College of Rites of the U.S.A.*

Sovereign Sanctuary  
Ancient and Primitive Freemasonry

*According to the*

Masonic Order of Memphis  
In and for the Continent of America

• • • • •

Meetings held on  
September 29, 1948 – New York, New York  
September 18, 1954 – Pine Plains, New York  
September 17, 1955 – Pine Plains, New York

• • • • •

FILIAL DESCENT AND FORWARD

- 1815 – Gabriel Mathieu Marconis de Negre – France
- 1839 – Jacques-Etienne Marconis de Negre, 97° Grand Hierophant
- 1856 – David McLellan, 96° – U.S.A.
- 1861 – Harry J. Seymour, 96°
  - 1867 – Calvin C. Burt, 96°
  - 1870 – Isaac H. Parrish, 96°
  - 1870 – Darius Wilson, 96°
- 1874 – Alexander B. Mott, 96°
- 1889 – Harvey C. Goodale, 96°
- 1914 – Elis B. Guild, 96°
  - 1925 – Roland A. Case, 96°
  - 1948 – Henry V. A. Parsell, 96°
  - 1948 – Harold V. B. Voorhis, 96°
- 1925 – Edwin S. Westlake, 96°
- 1948 – Sherwood V. Westlake, 96°
- 1952 – Harold V. B. Voorhis, 96°
- 1954 – Henry Emmerson, 96°
- 1954 – Harold V. B. Voorhis, 97° Grand Hierophant

## THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

The “Rite of Memphis” existed under various names in several countries. According to what appears to be the most reliable accounts, it was designed by one Samuel Honis, a native of Cairo, Egypt, who, with Gabriel Mathieu Marconis de Negre and others, founded the first Lodge, Les Disciples de Memphis at Montauban, France, in 1815. The Rite consisted, when in full bloom, of 96 degrees of which 90 were “working” degrees and 6 official grades. There is also the grade of Grand Hierophant 97° who presides as head of the Rite in the world. The latter is selected by the presiding Grand Master Generals of the Sovereign Sanctuaries existing in the various countries where bodies of the Rite function. The last Grand Hierophant (prior to 1854) appears to have been John Yarker of England, who died on March 20, 1913.

On November 9, 1956, the Grand Hierophant, Jacques-Etienne Marconis de Negre, 97°, visited the United States and set up a Sovereign Sanctuary with David McLellan, 96° Grand Master General. The order did not prosper and Harry J. Seymour, 96°, who visited France, was designated Grand Master General of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the U.S.A. In 1874, Alexander B. Mott, 96° became head of the Sovereign Sanctuary. He was succeeded by Harvey Goodale 96° in 1889 and then Elis B. Guild, 96° in 1914. The successions and splits in the Order from 1861 to 1925 are too complicated to rehearse here. There were Sovereign Sanctuaries of the Rite in France, England, Germany, Canada, New Zealand and possibly Belgium and Italy, besides in the United States. All these bodies outside of the United States are dormant.

The Calvin C. Burt-Isaac H. Parrish and the Darius Wilson groups in the United States have long since become dormant. The Elis B. Guild group split and there came into existence a group headed by Roland A. Case. This group would have expired but for the authority resting in Henry V.A. Parsell, who conferred the 95° on Harold V. B. Voorhis on November 14, 1931 by letters patent.

SEPTEMBER 29, 1948

On the above date Henry V.A. Parsell, 96°, with Harold V. B. Voorhis, 95°, acting as Grand Conservator, opened a meeting of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Roland A. Case group in New York City. He then conferred the 90° on the following brethren, who were in attendance:

Arthur A. Bryant	Walter E. Price
Henry Emmerson	Godfrey Pittis
Taylor B. Grant	Elmer T. Reid
George O. Linkletter	Francis J. Scully

ALBERT PIKE & WILLIAM L. CUMMINGS

Archibald R. McNeill

Ward K. St. Clair

James C. Patterson

Stanley W. Wakefield

Wendell K. Walker

Brother Parsell was elected Grand Master General 96° and he then resigned. Brother Harold V. B. Voorhis was then elected Grand Master General 96° and the Sovereign Sanctuary selected, viz:

96° - HAROLD V. B. VOORHIS	Grand Master General
95° - HENRY EMMERSON	Grand Conservator
94° - ARCHIBALD R. MCNEILL	Grand Administrator
93° - WARD K. ST. CLAIR	Regulator General
92° - STANLEY W. WAKEFIELD	Grand Catechist
91° - ELMER T. REID	Grand Defender

It was moved and unanimously carried that that the Sovereign Sanctuary transfer its powers and authority to the Grand College of rites of the U.S.A., through the Grand Master general, with the understanding that the Rite as a sovereign body be **CLOSED**, *ad infinitum*, and its powers and authority be vested in the said Grand College of Rites of the U.S.A. upon their acceptance. The Grand College of Rites of the U.S.A. did on February 20, 1949, accept powers and authority and thus the Roland A. Case branch of the Rite of Memphis became extinct.

S E P T E M B E R 1 8 , 1 9 5 4

The main branch of the Order of Memphis, upon the death of Elis B. Guild, 96°, passed to Edwin S. Westlake, 96° (who was then Grand Representative-General). By letters patent dated March 19, 1948, the latter, when in his seventy-fourth year, transmitted his powers and authority to his son, Sherwood Vincent Westlake, 96°. On August 15, 1952, by letters patent, Brother Sherwood V. Westlake transmitted these powers and authority to Harold V. B. Voorhis, 96°.

Pursuant to these powers and authority, and acting as Grand Master General, Harold V. B. Voorhis, 96°, called a meeting of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the U.S.A. on September 18, 1954 in the Archibald Robinson McNeill Hall, Pine Plains, New York, with the following present:

\*Harold V. B. Voorhis, 96°, presiding

Albin C. Anderson

Frederick A. Morgenroth

## THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

William B. Cowan	John E. Pollock, Jr.
Ralph B. Eckert	*Ward K. St. Clair
*Henry Emmerson	Robert W. Stowbridge
Raymond B. Holtz	*Wendell K. Walker
*Archibald R. McNeill	M. Wilbur West

*\*Present on September 29, 1948 when the Roland A. Case group was resuscitated by Henry V. A. Parsell, 96°, and Harold V. B. Voorhis was elected Grand Master General.*

The Grand Master General explained that the purpose of the meeting was to resuscitate the main branch of the Order of Memphis as was done in the case of the Roland A. Case group and then to offer the transfer of the powers and authority of the Sovereign Sanctuary to the Grand College of Rites of the U.S.A.

Accordingly the Acting Grand Master General conferred the 90° on all present. Past Grand Master General Henry V. A. Parsell, 9°, of the Roland A. Case group and Past Grand Master General William L. Cummings, 96°, who received the 95° in 1917 and is the last surviving member of one of the intermediate groups, were recognized with these titles in this Sovereign Sanctuary. Certificates were ordered printed – one for each of the Brethren present and one for each of the Past Grand Master Generals, Henry V.A. Parsell, Sherwood V. West-lake and William L. Cummings.

The Sovereign Sanctuary was selected as follows:

96° – HENRY EMMERSON	Grand Master General
95° – ARCHIBALD R. MCNEILL	Grand Conservator
94° – WARD K. ST. CLAIR	Grand Administrator
93° – M. WILBUR WEST	Regulator General
92° – FREDERICK A. MORGENTHOTH	Grand Catechist
91° – RAYMOND B. HOLTZ	Grand Defender

There being this single active Sovereign Sanctuary of the Rite of Memphis in the World, Harold V. B. Voorhis was affirmed as the Grand Hierophant, 97°, of the Order. The Grand Hierophant then appointed Henry Emmerson, 96°, as Grand Chancellor of the Order.

It was then moved to transfer the powers and authority of the Rite and Order of Memphis to the Grand College of Rites of the U.S.A. through the Grand Hierophant, with the understanding that the Rite as a sovereign body be **CLOSED, ad infinitum**, and its powers and authority be vested in the said Grand College of Rites of the U.S.A. upon their acceptance.

ALBERT PIKE & WILLIAM L. CUMMINGS

(Signed) HENRY EMMERSON, 96°

*Grand Master General*

Attest:

M. WILBUR WEST, 93°

*Regulator General*

SEPTEMBER 17, 1955

Upon the call of the Grand Master General, Henry Emmerson, 96°, a meeting of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the United States of America, Order of Memphis, was held in Archibald Robinson McNeill Hall, Pine Plains, New York, on Saturday, September 17, 1955, with the following members present (every member of the Sovereign Sanctuary):

HAROLD V. B. VOORHIS, 97°	Grand Heirophant
HENRY EMMERSON, 96°	Grand Master General
ARCHIBALD R. MCNEILL, 95°	Grand Conservator
WARD K. ST. CLAIR, 94°	Grand Administrator
M. WILBUR WEST, 93°	Regulator General
FREDERICK A. MORGENTHOTH, 92°	Grand Catechist
RAYMOND B. HOLTZ, 91°	Grand Defender
Albin C. Anderson, 90°	Ralph B. Eckert, 90°
	Robert W. Stowbridge, 90°

It was moved and unanimously carried that the following brethren be made Sublime Masters of the Great Work, 90°:

George A. Lambert  
Laurence R. Atherton  
Taylor B. Grant (present September 29, 1948)  
Harry Klein  
Lowell M. Limpus (in absentia)  
Godfrey Pittis (present September 29, 1948)  
Franklin H. Wheat  
William R. Wheelan

THE SPURIOUS RITES OF MEMPHIS AND MISRAIM

Brother George A. Lambert was Exemplar for those invested and Knighted by the Grand Master general. As spokesman for the group Brother Lambert expressed appreciation for the Knighting in his usual pleasing manner.

Certificates to me made as ordered at the last meeting are to include the names of those elected on this date.

The Knights were unanimous in deciding that, at the next meeting of the Grand College of Rites of the U.S.A., that the Grand Hierophant make the transfer of our powers to that body, as moved at our Assembly of September 18, 1954.

(Signed) HENRY EMMERSON, 96°

*Grand Master General*

Attest:

M. WILBUR WEST, 93°

*Regulator General*

